

ATTACHMENT 1

Juvenile Court Mental Health Services

Program Description

In Los Angeles County, there are over 30,000 minors under the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court. Many of these minors have needs for mental health services; approximately 10% are being treated with psychotropic medications. Juvenile Court judicial officers must make decisions regarding minors under their jurisdiction which affect and are influenced by the mental health of these minors. To optimally interface with the mental health provider system, it is vital for the Juvenile Court to have timely access to mental health consultation and liaison services. Juvenile Court Mental Health Services (JCMHS) serves this function.

The mission of JCMHS is to optimize mental health care for children who are under the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court. JCMHS accomplishes this goal through facilitation of effective Court decision making by helping all Court personnel obtain and interpret relevant mental health information and promoting collaboration between the various agencies in making and implementing plans to meet children's mental health needs.

When a child is referred to JCMHS, mental health information regarding the child is obtained by various means including direct clinical evaluation, speaking to others who are significant sources of information, reviewing clinical and other records etc. JCMHS consults with judges, attorneys, CSWs, probation officers, child advocates, family members and others and serves as liaison between them and members of the mental health provider system. This service facilitates the Court's understanding of minors' mental health problems and needs for services and enables the Court and related agencies to effectively access mental health resources on behalf of the child. JCMHS also provides a portal through which the mental health system is able to communicate with the Court system.

The mental health needs of Juvenile Court dependents and wards are often complex and their elucidation may best be accomplished by a multi-disciplinary approach. Recognizing this, JCMHS functions may be performed by clinicians of different disciplines working as a team.

Functions of JCMHS fall into three main categories:

1. GENERAL MH CONSULTATION AND LIAISON TO DEPENDENCY COURTS

Upon request by Juvenile Court personnel, JCMHS staff perform the following functions:

- Assessment by JCMHS to clarify a child's mental health needs, whether they are benefiting from existing services and if not, what new services should be provided.
- Assisting the Court to determine when mental health evaluations would be useful in a given case and what types of evaluations to order.
- Assisting the Court in understanding and interpreting the results of evaluations.
- Facilitating obtaining information and services from the mental health system.
- Providing information about mental health placement and treatment resources.
- Facilitating multi-agency collaboration to meet mental health treatment goals.
- Organizing case conferences to achieve collaboration in difficult or unusual cases.
- These functions may be provided by any of the clinical staff.

2. PARTICIPATION IN THE CROSSOVER YOUTH PROJECT

Pursuant to the Juvenile Court WIC 241.1 Protocol:

- A multi-agency (DCFS, Probation and DMH) evaluation of minors who appear to fall under both WIC 300 and 600 sections is performed. The product of this process is a report to the Court recommending which branch of the Juvenile Court (dependency or delinquency) should have jurisdiction. The role of JCMHS is to make mental health recommendations to the judicial officers to best meet the mental health needs of the minor.
- JCMHS clinicians collaborate with the CSW and DPO to:
 - Collect existing mental health information
 - Obtain or perform new assessments if permitted by the minor's attorneys
 - Determine the extent and nature of a minor's need for mental health services
 - Recommendations are documented in a written JCMHS report which is incorporated in the overall multi-agency report.
 - Participate in multi-disciplinary team meetings to discuss findings and recommendations and appear in juvenile delinquency court hearings as requested
 - Consult with co-located DMH staff (Specialized Foster Care) to share information regarding any mental health issues, services and needs of these youth in order to assist the Specialized Foster Care staff with their responsibilities with linking minors to available and appropriate services
- WIC 241.1 activities are primarily performed by Psychiatric Social Workers.

3. PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATION TREATMENT MONITORING AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

- Pursuant to the Juvenile Court Psychotropic Medication Authorization Protocol:
 - JCMHS medical staff (clinical pharmacist, psychiatrist) review all requests to the Juvenile Court for authorization to administer psychotropic medication to minors under Court jurisdiction and make recommendations to the Court as to the propriety of the proposed treatment. This enables the Court to obtain and properly interpret information relevant to decision making regarding such authorization. (Approximately 10,000 requests for Court authorization to administer psychotropic medication are reviewed each year.)
- Pursuant to a request from children's judges or attorneys (see appendix):
 - JCMHS medical staff perform an assessment of children's need for treatment with psychotropic medication, response to treatment, presence of adverse effects etc. and consult with their attorneys and judges regarding authorization of the treatment and/or intervention by the Court to effect changes in treatment.